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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE

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# Signs

and

# Symptoms

*of trends in public health*

## **Household Sanitation**

In Birmingham, Ala., the department of health has assigned four employees full time to make personal visits to householders, in an effort to encourage proper disposal of garbage and rubbish, control animal nuisances, and reduce accident hazards. In 1959, 37,621 premise inspections were made for sanitary conditions and 9,603 nuisances were abated which included rats, flies, mosquitoes, and animals. Premises cleaned as a result of these inspections totaled 3,649.

## **Nuclear Liability Laws**

Peaceful uses of atomic energy, as they expand, require significant changes in current legal concepts, according to a study published recently by the University of Michigan.

Entitled "Atoms and the Law," the 1,500-page study summarizes 9 years of work in this field by the University's Law School. The authors are Dean E. Blythe Stason and Profs. Samuel D. Estep and William J. Peirce.

Major changes foreseen include "contingent injury funds" to pay for personal injuries resulting from radiation and other atomic hazards, when their effects are not immediately apparent; legislation to clarify the liabilities involved in various types of atomic activity, balancing the value of technological advances with the hazard involved for society; and revision of workmen's compensation laws to cover atomic cases, including some means of apportioning costs of radiation injuries where more than one employer may be involved.

## **British Medical Care**

Public health has a broad horizon as viewed by Dr. J. L. Burn, health officer of Salford, England, in his "Recent Advances in Public Health," published by Little, Brown. Writing as a physician participating in England's National Health Plan, Dr. Burn's experience extends far beyond the usual concept of public health as a means of containing contagious diseases or assuring safe water supplies. He explains at length his work in rehabilitation, the care of mental defectives, the prevention of mental illness, the maladjusted child, the "delicate child," unmarried parents, problem families, as well as homes for the elderly, the disabled housewife, the prevention of eviction, and chronic bronchitis, lung cancer, immunization procedures, food hygiene, radiation hazards, and fluoridation. The plan provides a home bathing service, a domiciliary foot health service, and a laundry service for incontinent patients in the home.

## **Health Services Explained**

"A Guide for Coordinating Health Instruction and Health Service," issued in Marion County, Ind., is based on the experience of public and parochial school teachers, school administrators, and public health nurses. The plastic-bound booklet presents in illustrated pages a concise delineation of the purpose of each school health program, eligibility requirements, and where responsibility is delegated.

Expressed need prompted the school health committee of the Marion County Tuberculosis Association to sponsor a workshop in

1956 attended by 90 participants for the purpose of developing a clear definition of the responsibilities of the teacher and the nurse in the administration of the various health services and related instruction.

Each workshop participant reviewed and approved the final draft of the guidebook. The foreword emphasizes, however, that this is not an administrative bulletin and does not change or supersede existing policy. Rather, it is a suggested plan for an effective school health program through coordination of instruction and services.

## **Diabetes Screener**

A device for diabetes testing of a few specimens of blood at a time was demonstrated to 125 representatives of local health departments and private physicians by the New Hanover County (N.C.) Health Department in March 1960. The device, called the "cliniticutie," sells for \$40 and is described as a modification of the clinitron. The seminar was called to stimulate the interest of public health workers in a more intensive search for diabetes.

## **Voluntaries Studied**

An ad hoc committee to make an exploratory study of the role and responsibilities of voluntary health and welfare agencies in the United States has been formed, the Rockefeller Foundation announces, with Dr. Robert H. Hamlin, associate professor of public health practice, Harvard University School of Public Health, as study director.

## **Suffer Little Children**

Inspection of nurseries and nursery schools by a sanitarian in the Prince Georges County (Md.) Health Department revealed 70 children in the house and yard of a building with an indicated capacity of 42. Against the angry protests of the operator, the sanitarian then looked into the basement and found 20 more children in cramped quarters, inadequately lit, poorly ventilated, and with a single outside exit through a narrow hall. Corrections have been ordered, and the basement quarters closed.